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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001588

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ETTC](#) [JA](#) [FR](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: JAPANESE EMBASSY ON CHIRAC VISIT TO JAPAN, EU ARMS EMBARGO, AND ITER

REF: A) STATE 39909 B) TOKYO 743 C) WICKMAN/RECINOS
3/8 E-MAIL

Classified By: DCM ALEX WOLFF, REASON, 1.4 B AND D

1. (C) Summary: On March 8, 2005, Japanese DCM confirmed to DCM that President Chirac will visit Japan officially March 26-28. Chirac, who will be accompanied by a French business delegation and Commerce Minister Loos, will attend the 2005 Aichi Expo and later meet with PM Koizumi and the Emperor in Tokyo. Likely issues on the trip agenda are EU arms embargo on China, ITER, UNSC reform and the Middle East. On the EU arms embargo, in response to a Japanese inquiry on whether we were still interested in consultations with the EU and Japan, we emphasized that there had been no change on U.S. policy against the lift; U.S. focus is on conveying our opposition to the lift. The Japanese, on their end, are pushing the French hard against lifting the embargo and do not expect major action prior to Chirac's March visit. On ITER, the Japanese DCM stated that the "ball is in the EU's court." Japan had presented a compromise proposal, but had not had a response from the EU. Separately, Japan is working closely, but quietly, with India, Germany and Brazil on UNSC reform. End Summary.

President Chirac to Japan

2. (C) During the course of his conversation with the DCM on the EU arms embargo, Japanese DCM Yoichi Otabe confirmed that President Chirac will travel to Japan for official meetings March 26-28. Following the official program, he will take additional personal time and stay through the end of the month. Among others, Chirac will be accompanied by Mrs. Chirac, Commerce Minister Francois Loos, and a delegation of French businessmen. In terms of events, Chirac's first stop will be in Osaka for a sumo tournament, followed by a meeting with PM Koizumi in Tokyo on Sunday, March 27. On the 27th, the French will attend the Aichi 2005 Expo. The Emperor will host a luncheon on March 28. Otabe said that, among key topics likely to be discussed, were the EU arms embargo, ITER, Middle East peace process, and UNSC reform. Separately, we have learned that MFA Political Director Stanislas de Laboulaye, the new head of the MFA's Policy Planning Office Pierre Levy, and DAS-equivalent Director for the East Asia Department Marc Abensour will travel to Tokyo and Seoul, March 14-18 for consultations.

EU Arms Embargo

3. (C) Otabe noted that NSC and Department officials had recently discussed with the Japanese the U.S. position against the lifting of the embargo (ref A). Citing U/S Bolton's February 7 meetings with Deputy FonMin Tanaka (ref b), Otabe asked whether the U.S. had revised its views and dropped the idea of trilateral consultations related to the end of the embargo with the EU and Japan. The DCM explained that the U.S. remains firmly opposed to the lifting of the embargo and that the focus of our discussions was on making sure the Europeans understood our position. We reassured Otabe that strategic discussions among the EU, Japan and the U.S. are important and reiterated the latest U.S. policy guidance (ref A and C).

4. (C) The DCM and Otabe discussed probable EU planning on a date for lifting the embargo. Otabe said that Japan has been lobbying against the lift in EU member states' capitals. In terms of timing, as had been the case during the POTUS visit to Brussels, Japan was expecting that the French would not push for a lift in advance or around the time of Chirac's visit. DCM urged that Tokyo identify other events that could be used to postpone a lift, citing the Japan-EU summit in early May. The DCM encouraged Otabe to continue to push the French against a lift during the Japan-EU summit, and, more broadly to also focus Japanese lobbying efforts on those EU member states opposed to the lift, especially those that continue to have human rights concerns -- the basis for the imposition of the embargo.

5. (C) Otabe mentioned in passing that the South Koreans are now expressing interest in the issue, but did not provide any details other than his personal view that the South Koreans might not be reliable partners given their relationship with China in connection with Seoul's priority focus on North

Korea. (Note: In a separate discussion with MFA officials, we were told that the South Koreans have been strangely quiet on the EU arms embargo. Our MFA colleague also pointed to South Korea's ties to China as a reason for the silence.)

Middle East

16. (C) In response to his request, we updated Otabe on U.S. positions on Iran-EU3 negotiations, Lebanon/Syria, and the Middle East peace process. Otabe said that while Japan had no specific "carrots" to contribute, it remained keenly interested in the Iran negotiations.

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17. (C) We asked Otabe for an update on EU-Japanese discussions on ITER. Otabe immediately replied that there had been "no change." He said the Japanese had presented the EU with a compromise proposal, but that they had received no answer from the Europeans. The joint press communique to be issued during Chirac's visit will not get into details on ITER, other than a reference on the need to stick to the six party format. In response to the DCM's query as to why the French seem to believe the South Koreans might be reconsidering their support for the Japanese site, Otabe ventured that the French may be getting that impression from their close contacts with the South Korean Ministry of Science. In fact, he added, the Japanese have spoken to the South Korean "Blue House," and it remains firmly with Japan.

UNSC Reform

18. (C) Otabe said France has been very supportive of Japanese efforts for UNSC reform. The Japanese are working quietly with India, Germany and Brazil. At this point, they have prepared a draft resolution to be presented to the General Assembly in June. He noted that the draft resolution would not refer to specific countries as it's designed to maximize its chances of obtaining the necessary 2/3 approval. In terms of next steps, Japan and its allies plan to discuss specific countries for membership after the summer; followed by an effort to amend the UN charter and an eventual acceptance by the UNSC.

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